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RUEAHLH/HOMELAND SECURITY CENTER WASHINGTON DC

UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 09 SANTO DOMINGO 001235

SIPDIS

DEPT FOR CA/FPP, DS/CR/OCI
DEPT ALSO PASS TO KCC
CARACAS FOR ELLIS

SENSITIVE

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [KFRD](#) [CVIS](#) [CPAS](#) [CMGT](#) [ASEC](#) [DR](#)

SUBJECT: FRAUD SUMMARY - SANTO DOMINGO

REF: A) State 057623

B) Santo Domingo 000527

C) 08 Santo Domingo 001580

D) Santo Domingo 001030

E) State 097431

F) Santo Domingo 001177

G) Santo Domingo 001062

H) Santo Domingo 000062

I) Santo Domingo 001024

J) Santo Domingo 000140

K) Santo Domingo 000155

¶1. (U) Santo Domingo submits its semi-annual fraud report for the period March 2009 - August 2009 following format in ref A.

¶A. COUNTRY CONDITIONS

¶2. (SBU) Country conditions generally remain as reported in previous Fraud Summaries, refs B and C. The Dominican Republic ranks as a middle income country, but 43% of its 9 million people live in poverty. Economic conditions world-wide, particularly in the US, continue to have a negative impact on the Dominican economy.

The official unemployment rate hovers around 15% with reliable sources estimating rural unemployment as high as 40%. The World Bank estimates that remittances, an important part of the Dominican economy, have declined by 6.9% this year. Emigration remains one of the few means of class mobility available to a large segment of the country's population. These economic factors, combined with crime and insecurity, prompt many Dominicans to leave their country for the U.S.

¶3. (SBU) There are approximately 1.2 million Dominicans living in the United States and an estimated 100,000 U.S. citizens, mostly dual nationals, live in the Dominican Republic. Dominicans generally know someone living legally or illegally in the US. American culture is often emulated and the dream of finding success in America is deeply rooted. There is a huge incentive to engage in visa fraud or even attempt the 70-mile crossing to Puerto Rico clandestinely in a yola (small boat).

¶4. (SBU) The level of fraud at post is extremely high and post's Fraud Prevention Unit (FPU) currently ranks first world-wide in number of confirmed fraud cases. Corruption is widespread and innate respect for rules is rare. Mala fide visa applicants support a nationwide industry of visa touts and document forgers. Approximately 2,500 deportees were returned from the US in 2009 to the end of this reporting period. Hundreds more Dominicans were sent back after having reached Puerto Rico by yola. Although

improvements in U.S. documents, visa processing, biometric collection and record systems make fraudulent travel to the U.S. more difficult, large numbers of Dominicans continue trying to beat the system.

1B. NIV FRAUD

15. (SBU) Fraud is omnipresent and takes many forms. NIV officers do not depend on applicant documents and are encouraged to use simple 214b refusals when appropriate. The NIV visa refusal rate for the period covered by this report was approximately 36%. In these 6 months, 2,745 NIV cases were referred to the Fraud Prevention Unit (FPU) representing approximately 4.5% of total NIV applications. Even though the number of NV cases referred to FPU increased, the percentag of NIV cases referred decreased slightly because the NIV unit processed more cases during this repoting period. FPU confirmed fraud in 213 NIV cass, close to 8% of those referred.

16. (SBU) FU continues to routinely pre-screen applications fr visa categories C1/D, H2B, I, J, and P1 as well as B1/B2 received as groups. While FPU confirms fraud in less than 10% of these cases, it provides useful notes to officers conducting interviews. FPU has developed travel histories for various groups which help officers distinguish between legitimate and mala fide travelers. The number of fraudulent groups submitting applications is low and post believes this is largely due to the deterrent effect of FPU pre-screening. Visa classes for which FPU revealed significant numbers of confirmed fraud cases are discussed individually below.

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17. (SBU) Almost 90% of post's NIV applications are for B1 and/or B/2 visas and these are the majority of FPU's NIV caseload. There were 70 cases of confirmed fraud in B1 and/or B2 applications during this six-month period. FPU receives most cases as groups including: little league, sports, and even dominos teams; training, convention and other business related travel; religious based organizations; and civic groups. FPU maintains records, including come-back statistics, for most of these groups, and informs group organizers of the long-term repercussions on the group's future applications that will ensue should individuals overstay. We believe that by employing these procedures, pre-screening and monitoring groups for overstays, we have reduced the amount of fraud attempted. Nevertheless fraudulent cases varying from little league teams with mala fide travelers added to the rosters to fraudulent document packages prepared and sold by the actual head of the Dominican Chaplains Association were uncovered by FPU this reporting period.

18. (SBU) During this reporting period, post processed more J1 visas than any other category except B1 and/or B2. While there are few cases of confirmed fraud related to J1 applications, the category continues to be of concern. After our 2008 analysis revealed 24% of J1 travelers were overstays and an overstay rate for those with previous J1 travel of 38%, NIV officers increased their scrutiny of J1 applicants. As a result post's refusal rate rose to 63% during 2009, not unreasonable given the demographics of the applicants and documented overstay rates. The number of J1 applications declined to under 2,000 and some organizers may have been frustrated with high refusal rates. Post has yet to complete its 2009 validation study of J1 travelers.

19. (SBU) FPU confirmed fraud in over 10% of the P1 cases referred for investigation. Most P1 applications involve either musical groups which regularly tour the eastern U.S. or Major League Baseball (MLB) players. FPU pre-screening of all musical groups and the well-known consequences of including additional members solely for visas purposes help discourage this type of fraud. Still some legitimate musicians inevitably overstay in the U.S. Other fraud encountered during the reporting period included a well-known performer who previously toured in the U.S. using a B1/B2 visa as well as multiple performers included on the same petition (to save application fees) even though they would perform separately at

distinct venues in the U.S.

¶10. (SBU) Previous fraud summaries (ref B and C) have reported on F1 visa fraud by Dominican baseball players which remains a concern for FPU. Local media report a declining trend but still estimate that approximately 25% of Dominican MLB players are involved in age/identity fraud. Post has worked closely with MLB to improve procedures related to the signing and subsequent visa application of Dominican players. These procedures, some of which will be newly implemented in the coming season, include: MLB (rather than individual teams) managing investigations; pre-screening of all investigations by MLB New York before submission with visa applications; improved training and compensation for local MLB investigators; and early registration with MLB of all players participating in local academies. Two MLB teams opened new academies during the reporting period and at least one more has begun construction. Due to difficult conditions in Venezuela, several MLB teams have moved or are planning to move Venezuelan players to academies in the Dominican Republic. Post is concerned by the possibility for fraud in this group and, in consultation with MLB, is considering how to best process MLB related applications from Venezuelan nationals.

¶11. (SBU) FPU pre-screens most H2B cases using PIMS and other references to provide case notes related to history or associations of companies and recruiters, viability and operations of U.S. firms, previous rates of return and other information. Fraud was confirmed in over 38% of H2B cases referred to FPU. Even when these investigations do not lead to confirmed fraud, the background information provided assists officers when interviewing applicants. Santo Domingo's refusal rate for H2B applications remains high at approximately 85%.

¶12. (SBU) FPU supplied investigative material to the U.S. Attorney for the Western District of Missouri supporting a RICO racketeering indictment of persons and companies abusing Dominican (and other nationality) workers and violating laws and regulations governing the H2B program. Dominicans anxious to get to the U.S. by any means are willing to pay recruiters high fees even when prospects for legitimate work are questionable. Post regularly inquires about fees during H2B interviews, but applicants rarely admit to paying prohibited fees. On various occasions during this reporting period, companies in the U.S. halted applications being submitted by local agents without authorization.

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¶13. (SBU) Post continues using CA/FPP (H&L) and PAS funds in support of our "Maco" media campaign which discourages H2B visa applicants from becoming involved with professional visa touts. The campaign is built around slang use of the word "maco" which can mean both a toad and a fraud. The campaign has included radio spots, posters distributed to local "colmados" (corner store, 7-11 equivalents), beer bottle holders, large posters on the consular section walls and various press events. This year a Mambo (popular music) theme was developed which will shortly hit the radio waves. The target audience is low income with particular focus in the Cibao region; a demographic particularly susceptible to unscrupulous H2B recruiters and regularly associated with visa fraud.

¶14. (SBU) There was one significant case involving F1 visa fraud during this reporting period. NIV received a large group of applicants claiming plans to study English at a Florida school and referred them to FPU. FPU found that they all came through a local H2B recruiter and were associated with an H2B company/recruiter in the U.S. Further investigation revealed 52 related (fraudulent) F1 applications in Santo Domingo. CA/FPP also linked the U.S. recruiter with 198 similar applications in Ukraine and Nepal.

¶15. (SBU) Post conducts an annual validation of referrals. In CY2008 over 98% of 1,163 referred applicants were verified as having returned. The Foreign Commercial Service (FCS) accounted for close to one quarter of all referrals and the great majority of overstays came from FCS. No other section or agency at post had more than 2 referrals who overstayed. Post tracks information regarding those who have not returned and also informs persons/offices making the

referral.

¶16. (SBU) Post's recent validation study for children age 16 and under is detailed in ref D. The study found that almost 99% of the visa holders in this category returned to the Dominican Republic after appropriate travel. There were only 9 confirmed overstays in the sample; eight of them were female with one male adjusting status for residency in the U.S. None of the overstays had traveled related to a specific event, such as little league tournaments.

¶C. IV FRAUD

¶17. (SBU) Post's most prevalent type of fraud remains IV fraud in family-based categories, particularly marriage. Approximately 8% of IV cases, in which the officer could not easily issue or refuse, were referred to FPU. From March through September 2009, FPU recorded 889 cases of confirmed IV fraud representing 52% of IV cases processed by FPU. CCD statistics for the reporting period show over one-third of all fraud confirmed cases worldwide were from Santo Domingo.

¶18. (SBU) Most IV fraud results from petitioners who create sham relationships for immigration purposes in return for payment or to assist relatives/friends to reach the U.S. Cases referred to FPU are often resolved on the same day by FPU investigators conducting dual interviews with petitioners and beneficiaries. Many petitioners admit to fraud both verbally and in signed statements during FPU interviews. An estimated 10-20% of FPU referred cases remain doubtful after FPU interviews and are sent for field investigations. FPU has practically eliminated the backlog of IV field investigations despite an increasing workload.

¶D. DV FRAUD

¶19. (U) Dominicans are not eligible for the Diversity Visa Lottery. Post occasionally processes DV visas for non-Dominican applicants.

¶E. ACS AND US PASSPORT FRAUD

¶20. (U) The amount of fraud related to citizenship is difficult to measure. Applicants whose cases are not clearly approvable often abandon or withdraw the application when asked to produce additional evidence in support of their claim. ACS continues working to close previously abandoned cases whenever possible. Similarly PIERS enables post to thwart imposters claiming to have lost/stolen passports and soliciting new documentation. Other questionable

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cases are resolved through DNA testing. Even though these types of cases may involve fraud, they are not necessarily referred to FPU.

¶21. (SBU) During the reporting period, ACS referred approximately 30 citizenship-related cases. FPU confirmed fraud in six of them. FPU assisted local law enforcement authorities in another 35 citizenship cases, 20 of which were fraudulent (see para 42). Post continues to encounter cases of Dominicans who have lived and been documented in the U.S. after assuming the identity of a citizen, most often from Puerto Rico. ACS and ARSO-I encourage U.S. authorities to pursue these cases, particularly when the imposter has petitioned for others based on a fraudulent status. FPU regularly assists Passport Agencies and domestic USCIS offices to investigate cases involving Dominicans applying for services in the US. In a typical case FPU identified Dominicans who had entered the U.S. illegally and sought status by claiming to be Cubans. A more common scenario is for Dominicans to obtain Puerto Rican birth certificates and attempt to document themselves as citizens using

the false identity. The FBI recently exposed a ring which had stolen the identities of 12,000 school children and employees in Puerto Rico and sold them in document packages to illegal immigrants.

F. ADOPTION FRAUD

¶22. (SBU) Adoptions are not a significant part of post's workload. Issues related to adoption may arise in occasional NIV, IV and/or ACS cases. As is true in general, susceptibility of officials to corruption along with procedural weaknesses also leaves open the possibility for adoption-related fraud.

G. USE OF DNA TESTING

¶23. (SBU) Post has found DNA testing to be a very useful tool in IV and CRBA cases when other evidence is not sufficient to support a relationship claim. Dominican law allows for children to be declared late, sometimes many years after their birth, based solely on a declarant's statement. Thus it is easy to obtain legitimate documents in support of fraudulent cases. It is common practice for Dominicans to take in children as "hijos de crianza", documenting them (falsely) as biological children and never going through a formal adoption. In other cases, Dominicans who emigrate to the U.S., legally or otherwise, may have little contact with their children and have difficulty establishing the relationship. In these and similar situations, post requests a DNA exam.

¶24. (SBU) New DNA collection requirements detailed in ref E will decrease vulnerability to fraud. They will also significantly impact post's workflow. Informal statistics indicate that approximately 400 cases per month are referred for DNA analysis. Approximately 10% of those returned fail to establish a biological relationship. Most often cases with no biological relationship are abandoned without informing post, making it difficult to gather statistics. Post regularly orients new IV and ACS officers in the use of DNA testing and is reviewing DNA referral procedures while planning implementation of on-site collection.

H. ASYLUM AND OTHER DHS BENEFIT FRAUD

¶25. (U) Post has DHS/ICE, DHS/CBP, and DHS/CIS representation which handle these matters.

I. ALIEN SMUGGLING, TRAFFICKING, ORGANIZED CRIME AND TERRORIST TRAVEL

¶26. (SBU) The U.S. Coast Guard regularly intercepts go-fast, traditional "yola" and other boats attempting to cross the 70-mile Mona Straight and enter Puerto Rico undetected. Its biometric program identifies captains/organizers with repeated detentions and allows for successful prosecutions in Puerto Rico. While the majority of passengers are Dominicans, Third Country Nationals (TCN) have also been detected, including Haitians, Chinese, Cubans and

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Colombians. Unauthorized private flights also smuggle drugs and/or humans to Puerto Rico and even the continental U.S. Dominican authorities recognize the need to monitor officials and procedures at Santiago, Punta Cana, Puerto Plata and smaller airports.

¶27. (SBU) The Dominican Republic serves as a transit route for persons seeking illegal entry to the U.S. Several recent cases involved Iranians arriving from Caracas, obtaining fraudulent

documents (generally Israeli and European Union passports) and attempting travel to Canada and to other Caribbean islands. During the reporting period nationals from Sri Lanka, Pakistan, Cuba, Bulgaria, Slovakia, and Albania have been detained using fraudulent documents. Local authorities are supported in their ongoing investigations by our ARSO-I as well as other agencies at post. The porous border with Haiti has always been a local concern and Haiti's recent elimination of visa requirements for almost all nationalities holds implications for the Dominican Republic as well (ref F).

¶28. (SBU) An Interpol source reportedly identified the Dominican Republic as a fugitive haven. In the past six months at least 15 fugitives, including Italian mafia chiefs, have been apprehended here. The number of Colombians living illegally in the Dominican Republic while engaging in narco trafficking is receiving increased coverage in local media. One noteworthy case involved a Colombian with seven false identities, supported by a national IDs or "cedulas," who was previously deported from the U.S. after serving time for trafficking in narcotics. Investigation of the Colombian began after a traffic accident, and intensified when the public prosecutor consulted with FPU. (We confirmed his record in the U.S. and three of his false identities.)

¶J. DS CRIMINAL FRAUD INVESTIGATIONS

¶29. (SBU) Post has an Assistant Regional Security Officer (ARSO-I) assigned criminal investigative workload related to consular activities. Post also benefits from a vetted officer from the National Police (PN) Anti-Fraud Unit delegated full-time to the ARSO-I. During much of the reporting period the ARSO-I was detailed out to cover RSO staffing gaps and there was a two month gap before the ARSO-I's replacement arrived at post.

¶30. (SBU) The ARSO-I has coordinated with local immigration officials investigating Iranian and other TCNs transiting the Dominican Republic (see para 27), participating in interviews with subjects and passing relevant information to interested law enforcement partners. Other ongoing ARSO-I investigations are related to groups organizing illegal travel using fraudulent documents.

¶31. (SBU) The ARSO-I is following through with other agencies in the U.S. on several cases involving U.S. citizenship obtained through fraudulent means. In cooperation with the U.S. Marshall Service (USMS) and other law enforcement agencies, the ARSO-I has helped secure the arrest of various wanted persons as they presented themselves here for consular services. The ARSO-I also played a critical role in the consular malfeasance case reported in ref G. Other allegations related to inappropriate activities by consular personnel have been investigated by the ARSO-I.

¶32. (SBU) In coordination with local police the ARSO-I supports an effort to clear visa "fixers" offering services to consular clients from the immediate vicinity of the consular section. Several roundups by cooperating transit police (AMET), assisted by the PN Anti-Fraud Unit, have resulted in the temporary arrest of these visa touts and pushed back their operations; but this is an ongoing battle. ARSO-I diligence also resulted in the arrest of a money changer using counterfeit currency to defraud ACS and other consular clients.

¶K. HOST COUNTRY PASSPORT, IDENTITY DOCUMENTS, AND CIVIL REGISTRY

¶33. (U) The Junta Central Electoral (JCE) is responsible for issuance of "cedulas", the national identity card which is the only generally accepted form of photo identification in the DR. Persons age 16 or older present an application form accompanied by a birth certificate which JCE confirms prior to cedula issuance. Cedula numbers are unique and people generally know their number by memory. Recognizing the possibility of persons obtaining multiple cedulas under different identities, the GODR has made improvements to the

cedula system to counter this vulnerability.

¶34. (U) The JCE cedula update began in 2008 and now has approximately 3.3 million records that include biometric information. Roughly 45 percent of cedula holders have voluntarily registered their biometric information to date. Inclusion of biometric information with automated cross-checking of the database has already proven successful with JCE reporting 2,120 cedulas canceled because of fraud and/or multiple issuances. The new cedula and biometric JCE database represent a great improvement in GODR efforts to counter pervasive identity fraud, but full implementation remains difficult politically, and deadlines requiring registration under the new system have been continually extended.

¶35. (U) The birth certificate is the basic document used to obtain a "cedula" and subsequent passport. When registering a birth, civil authorities request the hospital birth record and the father must be present if his name is to be included on the document. Home births may be documented if supported by a statement from local officials. Births recorded within three months are considered timely or "oportuna"; declarations are accepted "tardia" at any later date. Annotations and/or corrections may be recorded years after the event and are generally based solely on the statement of a parent. JCE reports that so far this year over 86,000 late births were registered, including those made in special registration drives. Adults whose births were undocumented may register when accompanied by statements from five persons supporting the claim. Local offices issue the first birth certificate "acta" with the central office of the JCE responsible for all subsequent copies. Post only accepts registry documents issued through the central office of the JCE which has more reliable issuance procedures. The document may be in an abbreviated form, "extracto," or a more complete form, "inextensa," providing the who, where, and when of the registration and subsequent updates.

¶36. (U) The JCE is responsible for the civil registry system. Registration of events, such as birth, adoption, marriage, divorce, and death, occurs at local offices throughout the country with duplicate records sent to the central office in Santo Domingo at the end of every year. Records are handwritten into books organized chronologically with separate books for each type of event kept at each registry office. Changes made to any document are annotated in the margins of the original entry. Record verification requires a hand search of books at the central office. Efficient searches require the place and date on which the registration (rather than the event) occurred. More extensive searches may be done using date ranges, but take considerable time and effort. Because of the way records are maintained, searches based on name only have been impractical; general queries requesting a subject's birth record or marital status could not be answered without a location and approximate date. JCE recognized limitations in the civil registration system and initiated a comprehensive improvement project.

¶37. (U) Progress has been steady on the JCE project, now in its third year, to modernize the registry system. New registrations (birth, marriage, divorce, death) are entered into a computerized, searchable database. Whenever someone solicits a copy of a previous registration decree, that record is also entered into the system; including a scanned copy of the book/page where it was originally recorded. At the same time JCE is systematically entering and scanning records from its books working from the most recent back. At present JCE has entered approximately 22 million registrations into the new registry system. While the total number of registrations to be converted is not clear, a rough estimate suggests that the number of records contained in the database is approaching half of those available for living persons. This represents a great improvement to the registry system. FPU has had cases of record searches, which would have been impossible without the computerized system, yielding positive results.

¶38. (U) Dominicans may refer to their passports as biometric because the passport office scans an index finger with the application. A second scan and one-to-one check with the first is made to ensure that the person picking up the passport is the

applicant. Although the passport office retains the fingerprint scan, it is not available for use with any other GODR database. Because passports do not contain unique biometric identifiers, improvements in the automated cedula system (precursor identifying document) described above are critical to counter passport and visa fraud.

¶39. (SBU) There is always a concern that genuine documents may be obtained by fraudulent means or through corrupt local officials. Although significant improvements are being implemented, there

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remain systematic vulnerabilities. The ease with which registrations can be altered or even declared years after the event makes the documentation process susceptible to manipulation. Officials who are not well paid and receive little oversight are vulnerable to corruption and may issue documents even in questionable cases.

¶40. (SBU) Progress continues on the biometric initiative sponsored by Embassy's Force Protection Detail (FPD-DR) which is described in ref H. This project aims to establish an automated data base with biometric capability and integrate various local law enforcement systems. It will significantly improve GODR capabilities in combating terrorism, drug and human trafficking, and other criminal activity. FPD-DR plans to greatly expand the number of biometric capture stations and to provide servers enabling the integration of various GODR law enforcement agencies. A fully implemented initiative would provide for FPD-DR to receive biometric data from the GODR system which, once passed through US Special Operations Command (USSOCOM), would be available to various USG watch lists and data bases.

¶L. COOPERATION WITH HOST COUNTRY AUTHORITIES

¶41. (SBU) The FPU benefits from a high level of cooperation with GODR authorities. Dominican officials continue to respond to record verification and other inquiries both informal and official. The ARSO-I supervises a vetted officer from the National Police (PN) Anti-Fraud Unit who is delegated full-time to duty at the consular section. The officer regularly assists in investigations and provides local jurisdiction in cases where detention and/or arrest may not have been otherwise possible. Ref I details one of several cases in which the PN officer's ability to detain and arrest was critical to the successful prosecution of a ring supplying fraudulent NIV document packages. FPU also benefits from direct access to records in the police database.

¶42. (SBU) GODR immigration officials regularly send suspect documents and/or travelers to FPU for verification. During this six month period, 35 cases involving citizenship were referred; 20 were confirmed fraudulent involving imposters, photo substitute and counterfeit documents. Fraudulent visas were confirmed in another 12 out of 19 cases received from GODR officials. A final case involved a fraudulent LPR card. Cooperation allowing FPU to see the documents seized and to interview the persons detained has improved somewhat in these cases. Typically such cases result in a fine and conditional release if they are prosecuted.

¶43. (SBU) The FPU and ARSO-I worked in cooperation with GODR immigration and national police on several operations against document rings during the reporting period. In one operation a tip helped FPU identify travelers planning to use washed and reprinted visas (most on foils originally issued in Peru) to board a cruise ship from the Casa de Campo facility near La Romana. Immigration officers who traveled from Santo Domingo along with FPU personnel and the vetted PN officer were able to arrest two of the organizers.

¶M. AREAS OF PARTICULAR CONCERN

¶44. (SBU) In the past six months corruption amongst GODR officials received increased media coverage and recent surveys show that the majority of Dominicans see corruption increasing. There have long been charges of corruption and involvement of law enforcement personnel in criminal activity in the Dominican Republic. Local media reported the National Police (PN) Chief's estimate that 3,000 officers have been dismissed in the past two years. Large scale police transfers are common. In one recent incident, the entire PN force in Azua was transferred and 194 officers identified for investigation. Extradition requests involving active and former members of the armed forces further highlight the problem. Low salaries must compete with high pay offs, making the fight against corruption difficult amongst all levels and types of Dominican officials. NIV and FPU actively pursue visa revocations, in coordination with Mission-wide efforts to combat corrupt officials engaged in or supporting criminal activities. During the reporting period 23 visas were revoked, and more were physically cancelled.

¶45. (SBU) FPU receives a variety of reports from USG and GODR law enforcement agencies and we also review local media accounts to make

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CLASS entries for persons implicated in criminal activities who do not currently hold visas. Informal statistics kept during the reporting period recorded approximately 500 CLASS entries in a four month period. In spite of FPU diligence, post remains concerned that applicants with undocumented/unrecorded ineligibilities may still slip through.

¶46. (SBU) Post had five new cases involving altered fingerprints during the last six months. This trend was reported in ref J as well as the previous Fraud Summary. Some of these new cases were unique. Post's first NIV case involving fingerprint alterations was also our first female who later admitted to multiple attempts at illegal entry to the U.S. In another case "C" and "Z" shaped scar patterns were observed, rather than the usual horizontal or vertical cuts. After EFMs were unable to obtain acceptable prints from another applicant, FPU discovered that he had placed glue over all ten prints. When the glue was removed, he was reprinted revealing his previous use of a false identity. The interception in May of a Dominican finger slasher (denied a visa in February) who was apprehended in Lima, en route to Toronto using fraudulent documents, demonstrates the determination of some to reach the US by any means.

FPU and/or ARSO-I regularly alert local law enforcement contacts and support GODR prosecution of persons who have acquired cedula and passports in fraudulent identities. Some of these cases also involve altered fingerprints, not a crime in itself according to Dominican law.

¶47. (SBU) Post continues to be concerned by GODR diplomatic appointments supporting a large patronage system, whereby dozens of non-accredited "vice-consuls" are appointed and paid by Presidential decree, but act independently of the Foreign Ministry. For years, the USG has pressed the GODR to bring its diplomatic and consular operations in the USA in line with U.S. laws and regulations, Department practices, and the Vienna Convention on Consular and Diplomatic Relations. In June 2007, we requested via diplomatic note a full account of all persons working in the USA for the GODR; the GODR has not yet responded adequately. This problem has grown significantly under President Fernandez and has been raised in conversations with him (see ref K). In some cases appointees' status as Legal Permanent Residents (LPRs) or U.S. citizens renders these persons ineligible for accreditation for positions that are widely assumed to be sinecures with no official functions. Other politically appointed persons gain accreditation and then abuse their diplomatic privileges, often with little supervisory oversight. In one recent case, FPU obtained a signed statement from the "spouse" of a diplomat declaring that they had no marital relationship but had gotten a marriage decree in order to make her eligible for an A2 visa.

¶48. (SBU) Even though Consular support has helped local authorities detect and deter mala fide travelers using the Santo Domingo - San Juan ferry, its history of smuggling, corrupt immigration officials and reputation as a means of passport-free entry into the U.S. make

it a continuing concern. Changes in the ferry schedule combined with continued workload demands have forced post to reduce our presence during departure of the Santo Domingo - San Juan ferry. Boarding for Tuesday and Thursday departures now occurs during regular work hours and may be monitored through spot checks by FPU personnel. Consular personnel continue to offer assistance/consults during Sunday departures. Implementation of the WHTI travel document requirement for land and sea ports of entry has facilitated document inspection by eliminating travel using only a birth certificate. However post has seen that acceptance of Enhanced Driver's Licenses (EDLs) makes document inspection by GODR officials, now confronted with EDLs from several states, more difficult.

1N. STAFFING AND TRAINING

149. (U) Post's FPU is staffed by: a Fraud Prevention Manager (FPM), a Senior LES Investigator, four LES Investigators, one LES Investigative Assistant, and one LES Clerk. An ELO serves as back-up FPM and works five or more hours per week in the FPU. The FPU works in close cooperation with an ARSO-I and a local police officer assigned to the ARSO-I.

150. (U) FPU staff actively engages in FSI distance training and completed 2 online courses during the reporting period. A listing of all training received, with the number of FPU LES who have completed the course in parenthesis, follows: PC102 Immigration Law and Visa Operations (7), PC103 Nationality Law and Consular Procedures (2), PC110 Passport Examiners (1), PC120 Consular Task

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Force Basics (7), PC128 Detecting Imposters (4), PC545 Examining U.S. Passports (2), COMM0013 Business Writing (1), PY210 FSN Online Writing Lab (1), PY212 FSN online Writing Adv (1), PC143 Customer Service (1), PC542 FSN Fraud Prevention Workshop (4), OT501 FSN Investigator Course (3), PC104 Overseas Citizen Services.

151. (U) FPU continues to provide anti-fraud training for all newly arrived officers. In addition FPU encourages IV officers to participate in field investigations and NIV officers are offered windshield fraud tours of Santo Domingo. Consular personnel who volunteer for work at the ferry terminal receive further FPU training. Additional training, advising and coaching occurs regularly in staff meetings, during monthly Consular Development Days, and in consultation with individual consular personnel. During the reporting period, approximately 60 GODR officials, mostly from immigration or the passport office, attended FPU organized document detection training.

LAMBERT